

PRESS RELEASE

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MAN SENTENCED FOR ROLE IN COCAINE DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Servando Herrera-Vazquez, 20, Mexico, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 140 months in prison for conspiring to possess cocaine with intent to distribute. Herrera-Vazquez pleaded guilty to this charge on November 20, 2008. Herrera-Vazquez will be deported to Mexico after he completes his prison sentence.

Between May 2008 and June 2008, Herrera-Vazquez and eight other defendants conspired to possess cocaine with intent to distribute in the Watertown area. Herrera-Vazquez's co-defendants, Maximo Pineda-Buenaventura, Efrain Pineda-Buenaventura, and Perfecto Pineda-Duque have pleaded guilty and are scheduled to be sentenced in January and February 2009. Two of his other co-defendants, Will Bryant and Jesus Duque-Pineda already have been sentenced to 52 months in prison and 9 months in prison, respectively. Three of Herrera-Vazquez's co-defendants remain fugitives.

Beginning in February 2008, the United States received authority from Chief

Judge Crabb to conduct wiretaps on several of the telephones being used by Herrera-Vazquez and his co-defendants to conduct their drug operation. Approximately 8000 calls were monitored by law enforcement officers in which the defendants conducted drug transactions or made arrangements for the delivery of cocaine in the Western District of Wisconsin.

On June 19, 2008, law enforcement officers executed 11 search warrants in the Western and Eastern Districts of Wisconsin, resulting in the arrest of Herrera-Vazquez and his co-defendants, the seizure of over \$100,000 in United States currency, several automobiles, and multiple kilograms of cocaine. In addition to the arrest of the above-named defendants, police also arrested Arturo Pineda Lopez, Gerardo Pineda-Soria, Juna C. Pineda Pineda, Teodulo Pineda-Buenaventura, Otoniel Mendoza, and Eli Torres-Banos. All of these individuals were indicted by a federal grand jury in a separate conspiracy and have pled guilty as well, with the exception of Pineda-Soria who is scheduled for trial on March 9, 2009.

The charges against Herrera-Vazquez were the result of an investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Dodge County Sheriff's Department, Jefferson County Drug Task Force, Fort Atkinson Police Department, Watertown Police Department, Janesville Police Department, and the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigations-Narcotics Bureau. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul W. Connell.

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